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Winter, 1988
Volume Six - Number Three

MONTANA SOICC NEWSLETTER

Montana State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee

MONTANA SOICC

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ON THE SOICC...

The National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NOICC) is a federal interagency committee that promotes the development and use of occupational and labor market information. NOICC was established by Congress in 1976. Members include representatives of nine agencies in the U.S. Departments of Labor, Education, Commerce, Agriculture, and Defense.

NOICC works with a network of State Occupational Information Coordinating Committees (SOICCs), which also were established by Congress in 1976. SOICC members represent state producers and users of occupational information, including vocational education boards, vocational rehabilitation agencies, employment security agencies, job training coordinating councils, and economic development agencies. Many SOICCs include representatives from higher education.

The Montana SOICC's primary mission is to meet the occupational information needs of vocational education and employment and training program managers, as well as individuals making career decisions.

The Montana SOICC encourages coordination and communication among its member agencies. They also work with NOICC and other SOICCs in a larger federal/state network. As a result, data producers and users become more aware of each other's programs and services, requirements, and needs. Information on new products and research is circulated and exchanged. Projects of mutual interest are identified and carried out cooperatively at the state and federal levels.

NOICC and the SOICCs have developed information systems that are designed to help provide planners and program managers with up-to-date and locally relevant labor market information upon which to base program decisions. NOICC and the SOICCs have also developed systems and programs that help meet the labor market information needs of individuals making decisions about occupations and careers.

The Montana SOICC provides information to Montana in a variety of ways:

Montana Micro-Occupational Information System (Micro-OIS) -- computerized databases that combine multiple-source occupational and educational data, allowing users to integrate and format the data so that it can be understood and analyzed by a variety of audiences. NOICC developed the concept and design for the system; the SOICC develops and implements the system.

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Career Information Delivery System (CIDS) -- a computer-based system that provides information about careers and training opportunities. The system helps individuals match personal characteristics with compatible occupations. The SOICC supports CIDS in the form of the Montana Career Information System (MCIS).

Use of occupational information -- The Montana SOICC has developed and implemented the Micro-OIS and is now concentrating on enhancing the usefulness of the system. Publications such as the "Montana Supply/Demand Report," "Licensed Occupations in Montana," and "Montana Apprenticeable Occupations" are provided free of charge to users of career and occupational information.

Improved Career Decision Making (ICDM) workshops -- The Montana SOICC is involved in providing training programs that are aimed at helping counselors improve their knowledge and use of labor market information in career counseling.

A Quiz for Career Planners

Take this quiz and see how much you know about planning your career. Some of the answers to the questions may surprise you. Answers are on page 6.

Answer TRUE or FALSE

1. Most people can do well in any job if they set their mind to it.

2. Students who plan to work after high school need the same basic academic skills as students who plan to go on to college.

3. The average American spends more waking time in work-related activities (including homemaking) than any other activity.

4. There is only one right job for you given your ability.

5. Most people remain in the same job throughout their adult lives.

6. Apprentices are paid while they learn.

7. The best way to get the job you want is to wait until the right job opportunity comes along.

8. Over two-thirds of all jobs do not require a college degree.

9. Programs at two-year colleges are only for students who later want to transfer to four-year college.

10. Working in an occupation in the only way you can learn whether you like it.

11. Generally, you should choose your life's work as early as possible.

Lasso These Important Skills!

Certain skills are universally greeted with enthusiasm by almost every employer because they occur with some regularity in every job having responsibility and requiring decision making and good judgment. Identifying powerful talents should be encouraged, with the assumption that every skill can find a home somewhere. Special attention should be given to the skills that follow.

Get your hands on any budget you can find, no matter how small, and take responsibility for it. Manage how the funds are dispensed, keep control of the budget, learn what fiscal control is all about.

Take responsibility for the work of others in a situation in which some accountability is called for. Have direct contact with the work of others, expose yourself to the difficulty of giving orders, delegating tasks, taking guff, understanding the other person's viewpoint. Here is where listening can become a real feat of skill.

Accept a role in which you must meet or relate to the public. Greet visitors, answer phone complaints, give talks to community groups, sell ads to business people, explain programs to prospective clients, or even collect taxes.

Search for opportunities to demonstrate that you can produce good work when it is required by external deadlines. Prove to yourself and anyone else that you can function on someone else's schedule, even when that time frame is notably hurried.

Discover and cultivate the fine art of dealing openly and effectively with people in ambiguous situations. Learn how to bring warring factions together and to resolve differences between groups or individuals.

Take a leadership role in any organization, so that you are forced to talk publicly, prepare remarks, get ideas across, and even motivate people without feeling terribly self-conscious. Good public speaking is little more than the art of dramatized conversation, but it must be practiced so you can discover your own personal style.

Go public with your writing skills, or even the lack of them. There is nothing quite so energizing as seeing your own words in print--exhilarating if they look good to you, and a spur to improvement if they look awful. Practice putting pen to paper. Write letters to the editors of every publication you read routinely. Write a newsletter, however informal, for a club or organization to which you belong.

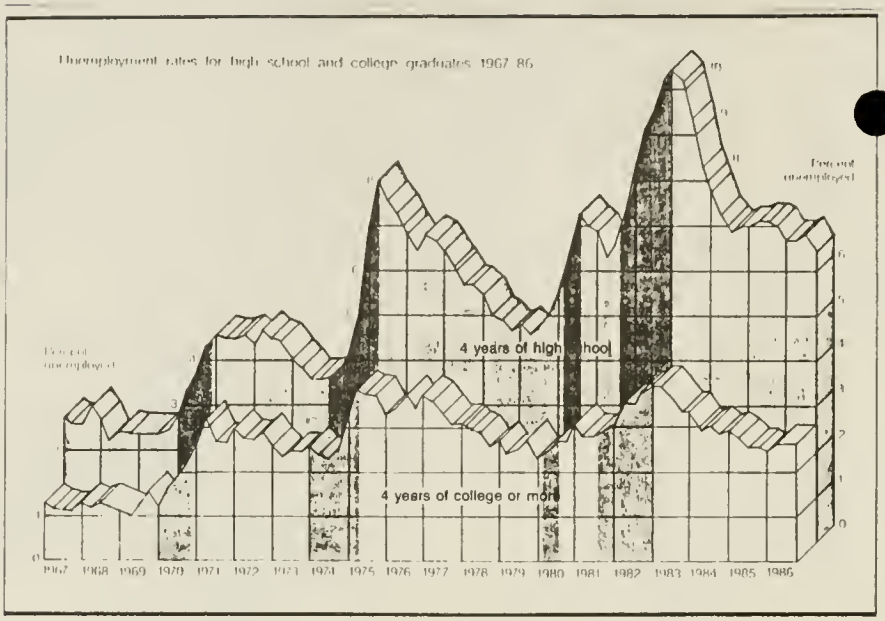
Take charge of any event that is within your grasp. It doesn't matter what you organize, as long as you have responsibility for bringing together people, resources, and events. The headaches involved teach you how to delegate tasks to others.

Learn how to acquire information from other people by questioning them directly. Start by interviewing the neighbors, your friends, and other people easily available. Imagine you are a newspaper reporter who needs information for a story. Discover the fine art of helping a person to feel comfortable in your presence, even though you are asking difficult or even touchy questions.

Refine your ability to explain things to other people. Since most teaching takes place not in the classroom but in ordinary everyday exchanges between people, you should become familiar and comfortable with passing information and understanding to others. Any position of leadership or responsibility gives you many chances to teach ideas and methods to others.

SOURCE: Howard Figler, The Complete Job Search Handbook; New Mexico SOICC News

More Education = Less Unemployment



More education has always reduced the probability of unemployment, and it has become an increasingly important criterion for success in the job market during the past 20 years, as shown in the accompanying chart. Although the supply of both high school and college graduates has grown sharply, there has been a relative increase in the demand for college graduates. The trends in unemployment rates for college graduates and high school graduates point out the ways education is valued by employers and changes in the economy over the past 20 years.

From an occupational perspective, the lower unemployment rate for college graduates versus high school graduates reflects the growth of occupations that require college-educated workers. Between 1972 and 1987, occupations with comparatively high proportions of workers with four or more years of college grew, while those with low ratios of college graduates generally declined.

Business cycle fluctuations also strongly influence the rate of unemployment for the various educational groups. During recessions between January 1967 and December 1986 (the shaded areas on the chart), the unemployment rate for high school graduates increased much more than did the rate for college graduates.

One reason the unemployment rate for college graduates rose less during recessions is that they tend to work in industries that are less susceptible to swings in the business cycle. For example, in March 1987, 42 percent of all college graduates were employed in professional services, an industry that has been relatively unaffected by changes in the business cycle. In contrast, only 15 percent of all high school graduates were employed in that industry. However, 30 percent of all high school graduates were employed in the goods-producing sector of the economy, which is most susceptible to the business cycle; only 18 percent of all college graduates were employed in that sector.

It is likely that the competitive advantage held by college graduates will continue in the future.

SOURCE: Occupational Outlook Quarterly, Fall 1988

The Grass is Always Greener...

Just how stressful is your job? According to "The Jobs Rated Almanac" (Pharos Books), you may find yourself less-stressed than a fisherman (and you vacation on the Big Hole River?). Combining government statistics on income, work environment, stress and competition levels, security, physical demands, and other work-related information, the book ranks the best and worst jobs in a broad range of fields. Below are a few of the rankings given:

Best-paying jobs with least stress

Actuary	$45,780
Piano Tuner	$43,600
Historian	$41.093
Chemist	$40,984
Physiologist	$38,695

Worst-paying jobs with most stress

Fisherman	$13,390
Cowboy	$12,397
Taxi driver	$17,570
Dairy farmer	$16,892
Travel agent	$13,764

The six most competitive jobs

Actress
Advertising account executive
Architect
Fashion model
Photojournalist
Public relations specialist

Best job opportunities requiring least formal education

Auto salesperson
Sports instructor
Fine artist
Photographer
Cosmetologist
Jockey

Worst job opportunities requiring most formal education

Historian
Personnel recruiter
Market research analyst
Economist
Teacher
Dietician

SOURCE: Montana Department of Labor and Industry Newsletter

Kaleidoscope Price Reduction!

Kaleidoscope of Careers is now available for $100! This is a $50 reduction in price.

Kaleidoscope of Careers is a video presentation developed for high school and middle school users. The set of five half-hour videotapes presents occupational and educational information for a total of 200 occupations. Each occupation is defined and shows workers performing on the job so that students will get a realistic view of a typical workday.

Kaleidoscope of Careers is being revised to enhance the presentation of women and minorities involved in occupations viewed on the tape set. The revised **Kaleidoscope of Careers** will be available in February 1989.

The Montana SOICC has entered into a vendor agreement with ACE Distribution Service and is able to offer **Kaleidoscope of Careers** at the reduced price of $100. If you are interested in ordering **Kaleidoscope of Careers**, please write to the Montana SOICC, P.O. Box 1728, Helena, Montana 59624, or call us at 444-2741.

ANSWERS TO "A QUIZ FOR CAREER PLANNERS"

1. FALSE. Many jobs require very specific skills. That is why it is important to find out what your special interests, abilities, and aptitudes for the job are.

2. TRUE. Both types of students will need to know how to read, write, reason, and compute well. They should also have an understanding of American social and economic life.

3. TRUE. Most people spend more time at work than with their family or in relaxation. You can see why planning your career is so important.

4. FALSE. Your abilities may qualify you for several very different types of jobs. It is also very likely that your career interests may change over the years, as well as your job preference.

5. FALSE. The average person will change jobs at least six times during his or her lifetime. Often a change in jobs will mean you have to learn new skills.

6. TRUE. Apprentices are paid less than a skilled worker while learning a trade by practical experience on the job.

7. FALSE. Often, getting a part-time job that is not your preferred job will give you a chance to get your foot in the door. You may later be able to change to a job that better meets your career goals.

8. TRUE. National employment projections show that as few as one-quarter of all job openings require college training. You should consider your career goals very carefully before deciding on the level of education you will need.

9. FALSE. Many students at community colleges receive two-year associate degrees which help them qualify for immediate employment.

10. FALSE. There are other ways to tell whether you will like a certain occupation, such as reading about it or talking to people in that occupation before getting actual experience on the job.

11. FALSE. Locking yourself into an occupation early in life may stop you from finding future opportunities and new interests. Keep an open mind, and remember you can always try new fields.

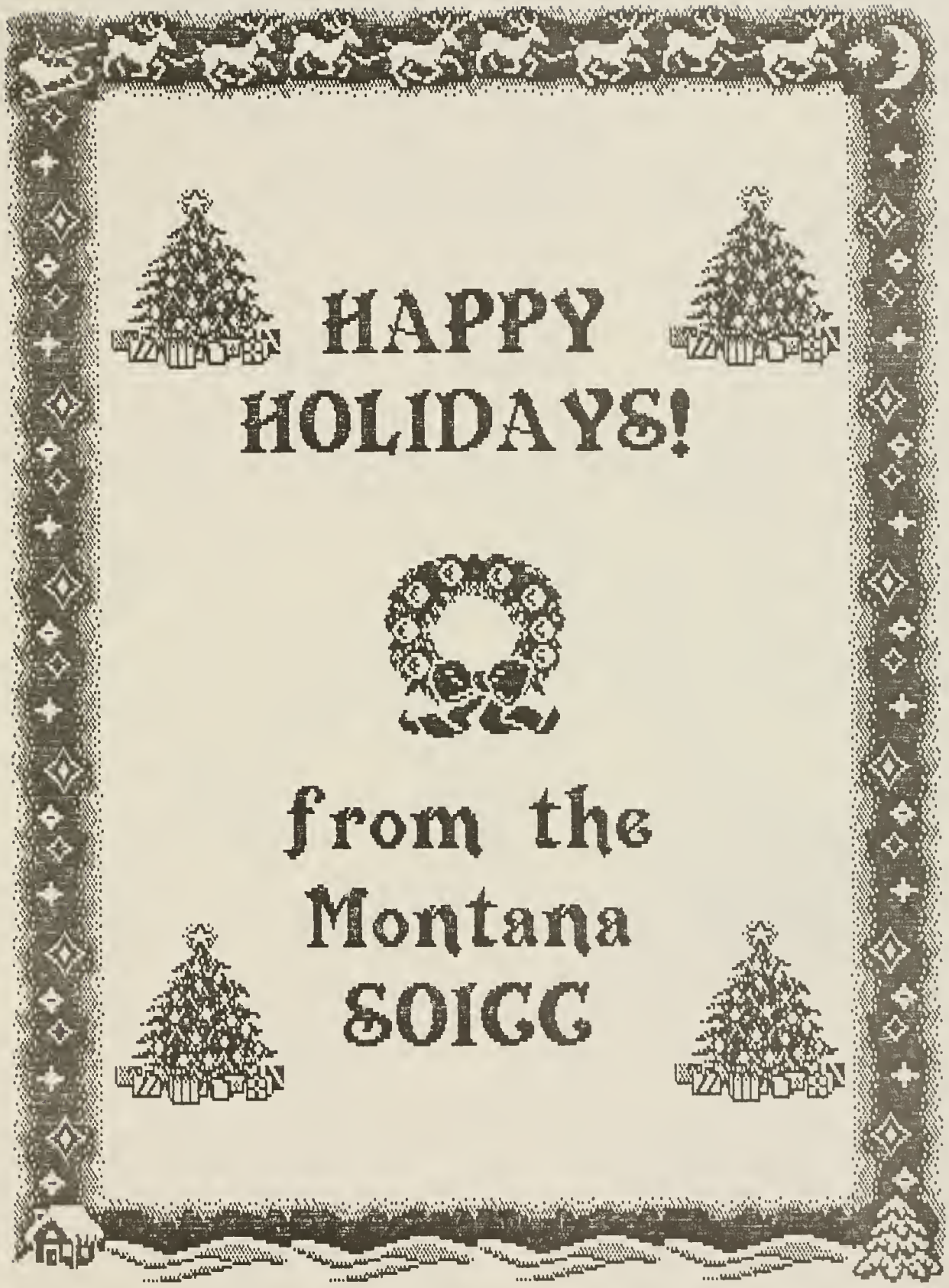
SOURCE: New Mexico SOICC News

Military Career Guide

The Montana SOICC has free copies of the "Military Career Guide, 1988-1989."

The "Guide" is a compendium of career information designed for use by students to explore military careers. The "Guide" covers 205 enlisted and officer military careers.

If you need copies, please write to the Montana SOICC, P.O. Box 1728, Helena, Montana 59624.



Kate Kahle, Editor
Montana SOICC Newsletter
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Program Officer
Montana SOICC

If you would like to contribute to this newsletter, contact the Montana SOICC at P.O. Box 1728, Helena, Montana 59624. The Montana SOICC reserves the right to edit all information submitted.

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